

Juvenile Delinquency and the Courts:
A California Conference

**A REPORT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
CENTER FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN & THE COURTS
ON**

**The Impact and Results of
Juvenile Delinquency
Team Action Planning**

SHELLEY M. STUMP, J.D.
Principal; Senior Project Analyst

RICHARD G. SMITH, M.A.
Project Analyst

Coyote Moon Consulting
883 Island Drive, Suite 205
Alameda, CA 94502
510-263-0332

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2001, the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts, through a grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI), sponsored a statewide conference for juvenile justice system professionals entitled *Juvenile Delinquency and the Courts*. This conference brought together teams from counties throughout California made up of judges, court executive officers, probation officers, attorneys (including district attorneys, public defenders, and private counsel); Department of Social Services personnel and mental health workers, law enforcement, victims/Victims Rights Advocates, educators, and community members. The purpose of the conference was to enable these teams to develop action plans to help guide coordinated and collaborative efforts in improving the delivery and effectiveness of juvenile delinquency services to their communities.

As one of the requirements of the SJI grant, the Administrative Office of the Courts retained the services of Coyote Moon Consulting as an independent project evaluator. In conjunction with AOC staff, the independent project evaluator designed and conducted an evaluation survey that produced the information reported here. A description of the survey content and methodology, as well as a compilation and analysis of survey results received, is included in the report. For a description of the professional backgrounds of the independent project evaluators involved in this project, see Appendix 7.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. SURVEY PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey was to obtain both verbal and written feedback about three issues relating to the State Justice Institute grant funded project *Juvenile Delinquency and the Courts: A California State Conference*. (See Conference Agenda included as Appendix 1.) The feedback instrument was intended to assess:

- I. *The Effectiveness of the Conference Juvenile Delinquency Action Planning Process*
- II. *The Subsequent Level of Implementation of the Action Plan*
- III. *The Barriers, Successes, and Benefits Associated with Implementation of the Plans*

Considering the intense emotional impact, and extended, often lifelong effects of the conference participant's decisions upon the lives of their juvenile delinquency justice system clients, it was decided that a telephone survey format would best allow respondents an opportunity to express their feelings, as well as the facts being addressed by the survey.

B. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The survey instrument was titled "Follow-Up Telephone Survey Guide" and was composed of fifteen questions. Six of the questions could be responded to with a simple Yes or No response. Space was made available to elaborate responses as desired for these questions. Three of the questions required a ranked response. The remaining six allowed for a narrative response. A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix 2.

The packet itself was composed of a cover page, six pages printed on both sides, in addition to a return envelope in case the participant chose to mail in his/her response. Faxing in the response was also offered as an option.

The cover letter indicated the independent evaluator's intention to contact respondents by telephone shortly after they had received the instrument for the purposes of arranging a thirty-minute telephone interview to garner their responses.

C. RESPONDENT SAMPLING

The conference participants represented forty-eight participating counties. Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) guidelines suggested that responses be derived from each of the county Team Leaders, in addition to one "Other" participant from each of the jurisdictional teams sent to the conference. Of the total number of each category in attendance, we randomly selected potential respondents representing various functions within the juvenile justice system including 10 Probation Officers, 10 Court Executive Officers, 10 Defense Attorneys, 8 Social Services Personnel, and 8 "Others." Within

these categories, all 48 potential respondents were chosen randomly.

Responses were recorded in 2 forms. For telephone interviews, evaluators took notes during the interviews. Other respondents completed the questionnaire and mailed or faxed the responses to evaluators. A sample of written responses received from Respondents is included as Appendix 3.

D. DISTRIBUTION

The surveys were distributed to participants through U.S. mail. At the suggestion of the AOC, in an effort to communicate a sense of impartiality to potential respondents, the mailing envelope showed a logo and return address for the independent project evaluator (described in the original conference packets). Unexpectedly, when potential respondents saw the independent evaluator's logo on the outside of the envelope, significant numbers discarded the initial mailing thus requiring an extensive and time intensive fax/telephone follow-up effort to obtain survey responses.

E. RESPONDENT PROFILE & RESPONSE RATE

A total of 96 survey instruments were sent to selected conference participants. Responses were received from 53 individuals resulting in a response rate of 55%. The final survey respondent population consists of:

Team Leaders / Judges	18
Probation Officers	13
Public Defenders	6
Court Executive Officers	4
Social Services	3
District Attorney	1
Sheriff	1
Educator	1
Other	6
Total	53

II. SURVEY RESULTS

This portion of the report sets forth each survey question and responses received. In addition to quantitative display of responses, narrative description, including quotes of some responses give a flavor of the meaning and feeling communicated by respondents. Also, evaluator comments are provided.

QUESTION 1. *Were your expectations of the conference met? As a team member, how often were the following four expectations met for you?*

- 1. Information was pertinent to my professional purpose.*
- 2. Time was well spent.*
- 3. I was part of a cohesive team.*
- 4. My personal motivation was increased.*

Team Leaders, the majority of which were Judges; Probation Officers; and Public Defenders composed the three largest categories of respondents. These three groups account for 70% of survey respondents. The table below illustrates the average responses of these three major groups to question number one and is generally representative of the larger respondent population. A detail of the entire respondent population's answers is included as Appendix 4.

A corresponding numerical value given to each of the letter codes [A=0 B=1 C=2 D=3] reveals the following pattern of average responses addressing expectations of the conference.

Letter Code:

A = None of the Time B = Some of the Time C = Most of the Time D = All of the Time

Average Respondent Group	1. Information Professionally Pertinent	2. Time Was Well Spent	3. I Was Part of a Cohesive Team	4. Personal Motivation Was Increased
Judges	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.5
Probation	2.3	1.8	2.3	2.0
Public Defender	2.0	2.5	2.2	1.8

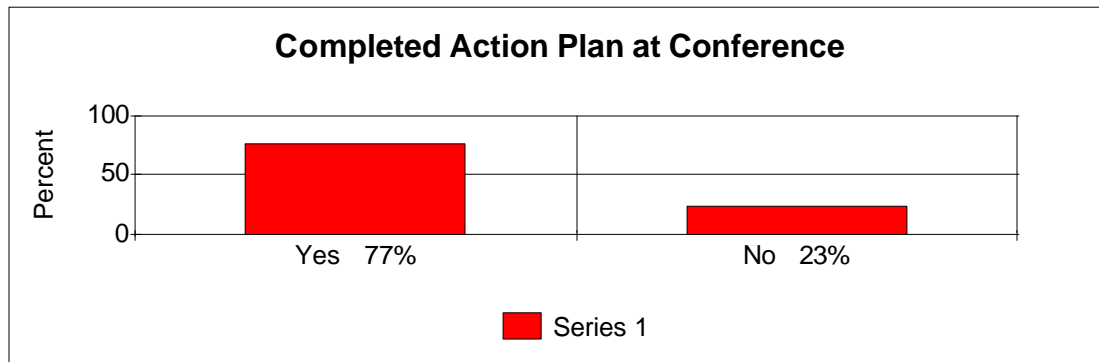
The overwhelming response to the conference, its purpose, informational content, and methodology was very favorable for the majority of team members as illustrated above.

When asked if their overall expectation were met, "Yes, very much so!" - it was "A wonderful kick start" - the conference was "Very impressive," represent some of the initial comments from respondents to this opening question. One respondent spoke of being somewhat "disappointed in the subgroups" while several others indicated that they didn't have any expectations going in, or that they became aware of their attendance a day or two before the actual conference and had not thought about it prior to that time.

Team Leaders appeared to enjoy a slightly higher increase in personal motivation with an average self-rating of 2.5, where as Public Defenders described their experience with an average self-rating of 1.8 for this area of question one. Similarly, Probation team members represented their time as having been slightly less well spent with a rating of 1.8, than did Public Defenders rating themselves at 2.5 for this category. These two 0.6 differences in average ratings are the largest variances within or between all categories and represent a 15% variance.

However, with an average response rating of 2.2 out of a possible 3.0 for all four components of this question across all three major participant groups, without doubt, the expectations held by conference participants were met “most” if not “all of the time.”

QUESTION 2. Did your team complete development of the Action Plan at the conference?



Most of the teams were able to complete their respective Action Plans while in attendance at the conference. Some of those jurisdictions that failed to complete their Action Plans at the conference, went onto complete them soon thereafter, citing the need to “...fit the plan in with other ongoing projects...” upon their return.

Those respondents reporting that their Courts had not completed their Action Plans as of the date of the survey, offered explanations such as:

- *Scheduling problems*
- *Other county distractions*
- *Lack of leadership and motivation*
- *Redundancy - no need for another team*
- *Not all parties were available after the conference*
- *No need - AB1913¹ and ROPP² grants provided wraparound services*
- *We're not sure what we want to do long term...nothing to add...already doing it*

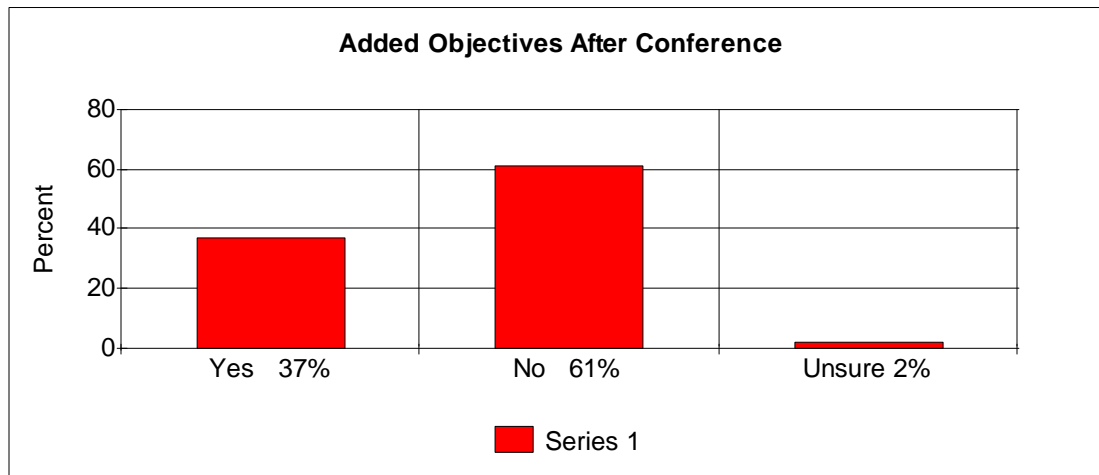
¹ AB1913 was legislation that provided a significant level of funding to Probation Departments in each county for use in prevention and early intervention programs.

² ROPP: Repeat Offender Prevention Program

Evaluator Comments

It appears that having fully accepted the task of creating an Action Plan to represent the collaborative focus, intentions and efforts of the individual county teams, most teams were able to effectively work together at the conference resulting in the majority of teams leaving the conference with a completed Action Plan in-hand.

QUESTION 3. *Have any additional specific objectives been incorporated into the Action Plan developed at the conference?*



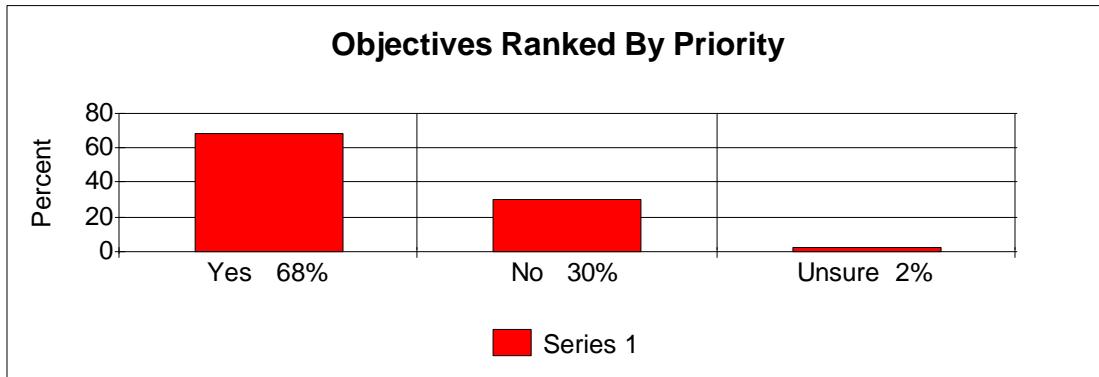
It appears that the conference initiated an impetus for action, which generated momentum lasting well past the actual conference events. The conference appears to have created a very welcomed - and needed - proactive response to ongoing juvenile justice system challenges. Although few completely new objectives were added by the majority of teams post-conference, respondents mentioned “lots of refining of conference objectives” and that the “workshops provided more ideas for us to incorporate when we returned.”

While 61% of respondents indicated no additional objectives were added post-conference, over one-third of respondents did. Some jurisdictions met with community groups to gather additional input and thereafter altered existing, or produced some new objectives. Others indicated that the adding of objectives is “an ongoing process” and yet other indicated “We will, pending the upcoming Youth Conference.”

Examples of objectives added to Action Plans after returning from the conference are:

- *Electronic monitoring*
- *Transitional housing*
- *Application AB1913 monies applied*
- *More female juvenile programs*

QUESTION 4. *Has your team ranked its objectives by priority in the Action Plan?*



Ranking of organizational objectives by priority is a basic and well-recognized tenant of effective management and creates a strong foundation for plan implementation.

Responses demonstrate that 68% of respondent teams have completed the all-important ranking of objectives by priority within the Action Plan, 30% reported not having ranked objectives by priority, and 2% of respondents were unsure.

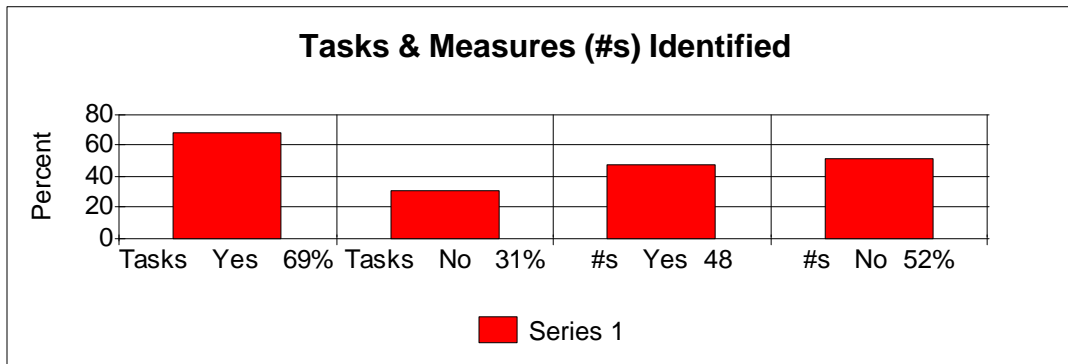
Some respondents reflected “all of our objectives were equally important” which made them difficult to rank. Some noted that often funding opportunities required that priorities be shifted to accommodate “what could be done” versus what would be nice or what they need to do. Others indicated disagreement about ranking. One offered, “We can’t agree on just about anything.”

Respondents also explained the lack of having priority-ranked Action Plan objectives with comments such as:

- *We are waiting for the Youth Summit to ensure comprehensiveness*
- *We are not sure what we want to do in the long term*
- *We have other priorities and time constraints*
- *We had only one priority and took it all the way*
- *We haven’t met since the conference*

A widespread feeling expressed by many respondents was that the issues facing the Juvenile Courts not only present themselves concurrently, but also with such magnitude, that the process of conceptualizing, let alone implementing, a priority-ranked operational response seems at times a daunting task.

QUESTION 5. Has your team identified specific tasks and outcome measures (#s) for each of the objectives listed in your Action Plan?



Identifying specific tasks and outcome measures for team objectives is a necessary step to ensure effective plan implementation. As described by many of the respondents, this effort has been a challenging one.

While a specific task could often be associated with a specific objective, precise measurements, or indices, often proved more elusive to establish for many teams. Some teams finished the conference with tasks identified and decided to allow the measures “to be developed,” at a later time.

For those teams unable to generate specific measures for their team’s objectives, vagueness about direction and future goals, a lack of meetings after the conference, and doing “the best we could at the conference,” illustrate their responses to this question. For others, community awareness or common knowledge held by players in the system that “we are doing a good job” serves as a *measure* in the absence of more empirical indices. Specific events provided some respondents with milestones of progress in place of quantitative data. The “setting of initial meetings to start the ball rolling” toward implementing an objective such as a “centralized data bank” served to establish a sense of progress for one respondent. And for others, the complete implementation of an objective, such as the establishment of a Tutoring Program, provides the ultimate *measure*.

Some respondents *measure* progress by the amount of time they regularly invest in the process of establishing an objective, such as a Juvenile Drug Court, while others *know* because, “We are doing it as we speak,” as in the case of initiating a CASA³ Program for one court. Criteria established within the Crime Prevention Act of 2000 or existing grant criteria served as guidelines for others as they fold their team’s Action Plans into these umbrella programs.

For respondents indicating that their team *had* been able to establish measures for Action Plan objectives, some examples provided include:

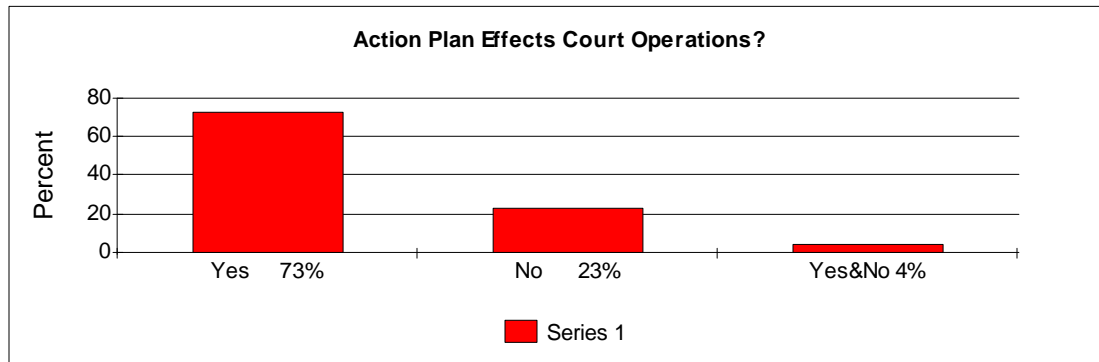
³ Court-Appointed Special Advocates Program
Final Independent Evaluation Report

- *Degree of measurable improvement in reading and math*
- *Observable decrease in serious violations of probation*
- *Number of schools with counselors on campus*
- *Timelines and deadlines*
- *Monthly reviews*
- *We measure success on a case-by-case basis*
- *Done or not done equals the measure*

Evaluator Comments

Effective performance measurement is a significant challenge facing the courts in many arenas and holds true in this Action Planning project. This was a difficult area for many participants (52%) to respond to with a sense of clarity and precision. As such, it is apparent that providing resources and guidance to help jurisdictions develop valid, accurate, precise and timely measures for the goals and objectives they create — be it at a conference or in the normal unfolding of their individual court’s daily routine — is needed.

QUESTION 6. *Will the Action Plan your team created govern the way your juvenile delinquency court conducts its operations and applies its resources? In other words, is it being incorporated into your Court’s overall strategic & operational planning processes?*



Although this question focused specifically on the integration of this Action Plan into the Court’s overall planning process, many respondents also noted systemic changes that have resulted from the Action Plan.

The systemic effects of generating a written Action Plan appear to be significant with 73% of respondents indicating the Action Plan has, and continues to become, a growing influence effecting the way their Court conducts its operations and applies its resources. Responses like “absolutely,” were commonly offered. Some indicated the Court’s strategic approach or “philosophy” had already been affected by proposition AB1913 and

ROPP, which primed the pump for incorporation of the Action Plan into the way their Court conducts its business.

Other respondents indicated that the Action Plan now serves as a “working model,” enabling us to be “more focused to improve educational services and our interview methods” which helps them prevent more clients from becoming “602” (delinquent) kids.

A team approach toward the available pool of resources, plus calendar coordination between system players, were cited as other examples of the Action Plan’s influence. Bench support was often referred to as critical, with a greater awareness held by judges about the overall comprehensiveness of the system e.g., a children’s system of care, was cited as an additional benefit.

The introduction of tutoring in juvenile hall combined with a change of focus on the more positive characteristics in kids, not just “blame and punishment” were other welcomed systemic changes mentioned. A major impact for some jurisdictions appears to be a new orientation towards an effort at implementing restorative justice principles *whenever* possible.

Twenty-three percent of respondents indicated “No” to the inclusion of the Action Plan in the Court’s overall planning effort. Reasons included a lack of meetings since the conference, or the “toll taken by the daily grind,” while others indicated that it was still “too early to tell.” Some noted the Action Plan “assists but does not govern” their operations. Others indicated that the Plan involved resources “outside the court,” and as such was inherently limited, while others were waiting to see what a change in bench personnel would provide. Others simply said “not yet.”

The toughest hurdle mentioned appeared to be that some staff “owns” their own plan and therefore excludes other input. The most benign limitation mentioned was the incorporation of the Action Plan into a pending update of the Court’s overall strategic plan.

QUESTION 7a. Please rank your fellow team members in term of how actively they participated. Scale: 0 = None ---10 = High

Letter Code:

A. Judge

B. Court Administrator

C. Community Members

D. District Attorney

E. Defense Attorney I. Probation

F. Educators

G. Social Services

H. Law Enforcement

J. Victims Rights Advocates

K. Others

The three largest groups of respondents were composed of Team Leaders, the majority of whom were Judges; representatives from Probation; and staff from the Public Defender’s office. Together these three groups comprise 70% of respondents.

The table below illustrates the average responses of each of these three groups to this question. Responses from the entire respondent population fall in line with those illustrated below. A detail of the entire respondent population's answers is available in Appendix 5.

Scale: 0 = No Participation ----10 = High Level of Participation

Team Member		Judges	Probation	Public Defender
Judge	A.	9.5	9.4	9.2
CEO	B.	8.4	10	10
Community Reps	C.	8.6	9.0	9.3
District Attorney	D.	8.1	7.7	7.8
Defense	E.	8.2	8.7	8.5
Educators	F.	9.0	8.5	9.5
Social Services	G.	8.1	8.5	8.5
Law Enforcement	H.	7.8	6.5	8.0
Probation	I.	9.3	8.4	8.3
Victims Rights Advocates	J.	7.7	2.0	4.0
Other	K.	8.2	7.0	

As demonstrated by these average ratings, it appears that team member participation during the conference action planning process was very high with 91% of the ratings by the three major groups exceeding 7.0 for all team members. Equally impressive is the 75% receiving a ranking of 8.0 or above. A sense of enthusiasm and contribution within a community of interest appears to have filled the air throughout the conference.

The lowest rankings (2.0 & 4.0), received by the Victims Rights Advocates participants, may well be a statistical function of this group's minimal representation at the conference.

Evaluator Comments

Law Enforcement received the second lowest average group rating with a 6.5 rating by Probation. For all other participants (minus the high and low for each of the above three groups) the average rating is 8.4. This variation in responses raises the question "Why the 23% difference in team rated participation levels for law enforcement?"

Several different possibilities may account for the seeming limited participation of law enforcement in the action planning process. First, the predominantly externalized character of law enforcement tasks and activities — their interaction with juvenile justice system clientele primarily occurs out in the field rather than within the physical structure

of the system (from behind the bench, a desk or bars) — may have influenced the perceptions of other team members.

Alternatively, there may be a perceptual differentiation at work based simply yet fundamentally on the types of tasks each group performs. For example “they” (law enforcement) gather and bring clientele *into* the system (us), we then process (place-punish-prepare-etc.) these clients via various dispositional options, eventually to be released back to the “outside.” In other words, at some level are police personnel considered *outsiders* within the system? Or, alternatively, is the limited participation of law enforcement shown in these results a depiction of the real level of participation?

Perhaps as a new collaborative planning and operational model replaces the more traditional *turf* oriented practices within and between agencies, all juvenile justice system professionals will be perceived of as having equal value as contributors and rights as participants. The now scheduled August 2002 conference may provide some indices to revisit this important question.

QUESTION 7b. Please describe how you characterize your ongoing contribution to your team’s planning process.

Ongoing efforts in support of a team approach to planning take numerous forms. In many cases the bench occupies a position critical to both the direction and implementation of objectives. Many judges function as liaison between various groups chairing meetings, and characterize their support as very intensive, very involved, and very active in all aspects of the planning process. Many on the bench also describe their efforts as “essential,” demonstrating both “an interest and a willingness to help” from the top.

Respondents other than judges depicted their roles in different terms. One respondent characterized her contribution as “helping remove barriers normal” to operational demands, thereby allowing a sharing of resources. For example, there is now an “opportunity for probation to be included as part of an emergency response team.” Others “attend all meetings” and “push hard for specific objectives” such as a juvenile drug task force and juvenile drug court. Some participants’ involvement was described as decreasing but “I keep in touch with players.”

Other descriptions of roles played by team members reflect a wide variety of ways in which all team members have contributed. Some support the planning process by taking full responsibility for the juvenile court calendar. Others function as conflict facilitators, or by helping to put together a Community Transfer of Knowledge conference. Most contribute by attending regular meetings where they actively support and thrive within a multidisciplinary approach. Only one respondent characterized his/her contribution as “none.” As time passes, planning efforts decrease while the demands of implementing a particular objective increase for some respondents. For some, support of the planning process is “a normal job function” while for others it is unavoidable because “I be da judge.”

The ability to now focus on specific issues - “and not waste time” - at regularly scheduled meetings serves as a supportive tool for some. Others support the planning process by presenting the service needs of juveniles “to as many government and private agencies as possible.” Some respondents see their high level of caring for youth as motivating them to meet with supporters and function as a social activist for “early intervention” through their ongoing efforts to create a comprehensive juvenile delinquency system.

Supportive efforts were often described by respondents as “providing common awareness and knowledge,” which enhance collaboration to accomplish system-wide progress. For others, attending “monthly 300/602 [dependency/delinquency] meetings” provides a regular venue for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan via frequent progress reports.

Evaluator Comments

Ongoing supportive efforts by both those within the system and invested respondents outside the system, take on a divergence of forms and intensities. At the root of these continuous endeavors appears to be a heartfelt concern for improving both the present quality of life (home, school and street life), as well as the decision options available to juvenile justice system clientele. This clientele includes both the kids and their “families,” regardless of the form it may take.

It appears respondents sincerely feel that improving the quality of foundational experiences for the kids *now*, is crucial to successfully improving the quality of their experience as adults. The sincerity of respondents’ concerns, exemplified by their focus and commitment to the team, is buttressed by a long-term commitment to helping “the youth — our youth.” Respondents hope that through this effort the quality of life experienced by their communities as a whole, and our society at large, is benefited.

QUESTION 8. Please describe your feelings about being a team member.

Team leader responses were overwhelmingly positive. Many describe their experience as:

- *Enjoyable*
- *Meaningful*
- *Very gratifying*
- *It leveled the playing field*
- *Very good, fuzzy and warm*
- *We know we will see results*
- *Very glad to be invited and participate*
- *Renewed our understanding of area information,*
- *One of the most rewarding experiences I have had*
- *Absolutely worthwhile - Very rewarding - Invaluable*
- *Increased my perspective in terms of territories of other players*
- *Increased movement toward individual priorities and shared responsibilities*

Evaluator Comments

Some respondents other than team leaders expressed a sense of frustration but acknowledged it represented a new era of increasing involvement, increasing rewards, and increasing challenges. Although they felt good about working with a “great team,” they also expressed frustration about being pulled from the increasing workload they were attempting to meet with decreasing staff. Other team members felt very excited but thought that weekly meetings were too much.

In contrast, some respondents felt more valued, more bonded and very comfortable with the team approach. A sense of empowerment was also expressed through exposure to resources and people system-wide that now allowed them the opportunity to understand how others “did it.” They felt their increased awareness and sensitivity “makes the system work better.” Several team members liked to see the “common vision” experience, which gave them a sense of excitement and hopefulness. The “mutual respect and great interaction” provided a rich experience for many team members.

Many team members also greatly appreciated the opportunity to “share collaboratively, to be part of a team and actually put words into action, and to share information and resources.” Alternatively, while others felt their effort was important and that they were committed, they also felt the team process was “extremely time consuming.”

Another perspective also noted about participating as a team was that in the process of identifying objectives and issues in detail, service gaps were often exposed and this led to an opportunity for “more specific application of financial resources: specifically AB1913 monies.” The team approach was also appreciated for the opportunity it provided to smooth over conflicts between players within a jurisdiction. The value of having “everyone at the table because it gets things done” was highlighted.

QUESTION 9. Do you feel that your team members’ contributions were/are valued?
Use the following numbers to indicate your perspective.

1 = No 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately 4 = Very Much 5 = Indispensable

Letter Code:

<i>A. Judge</i>	<i>E. Defense</i>	<i>I. Probation</i>
<i>B. Court Administrator</i>	<i>F. Educators</i>	<i>J. Victims Rights Advocates</i>
<i>C. Community Members</i>	<i>G. Social Services</i>	<i>K. Others</i>
<i>D. District Attorney</i>	<i>H. Law Enforcement</i>	

As with question 7a the three largest groups of respondents were composed of Team Leaders, the majority of whom were Judges; representatives from Probation; and staff from the Public Defender’s office. Together these three groups comprise 70% of respondents.

The table below illustrates the average responses of each of these three groups to this question. Results were rounded up to the next tenth when applicable. Responses from the entire respondent population fall in line with those illustrated below. The detail of the entire respondent population's answers is available in Appendix 6.

Scale:

1 = No 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately 4 = Very Much 5 = Indispensable

Team Member		Judges	Probation	Public Defender
Judge	A.	4.4	4.3	4.4
CEO	B.	3.9	4.0	3.3
Community Reps	C.	4.1	4.0	4.3
District Attorney	D.	3.9	3.9	3.5
Defense	E.	4.2	3.8	4.0
Educators	F.	4.0	4.0	4.2
Social Services	G.	4.3	4.1	3.3
Law Enforcement	H.	4.3	4.0	3.8
Probation	I.	4.7	4.1	4.2
Victims Rights Advocates	J.	4.1	4.0	3.0
Other	K.	4.0	3.3	4.0

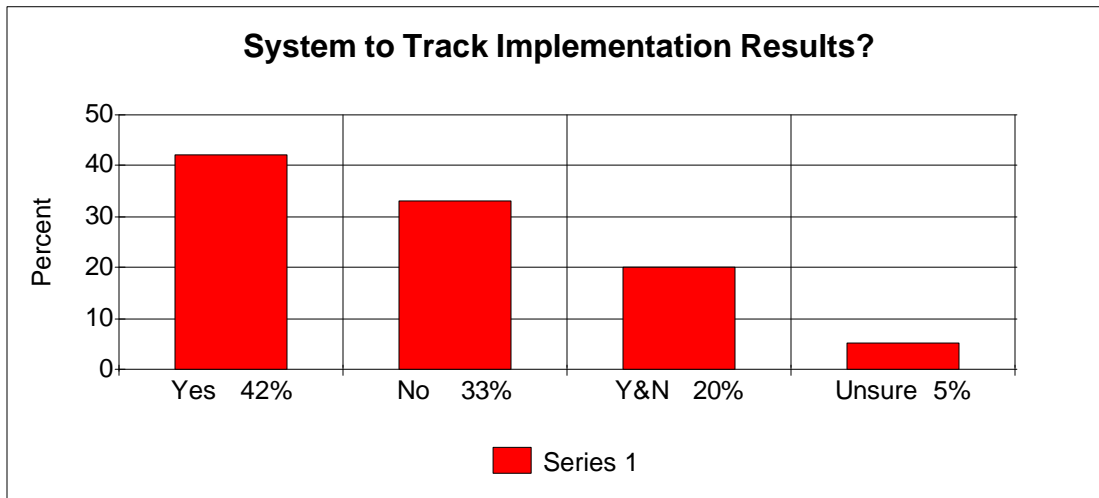
Evaluator Comments

It would appear that in the main these teams were thoughtfully assembled, and as such, provided the foundation for a rich exchange of information, ideas, perspectives and feelings. The resulting mix fostered a professional conference experience that was “very much valued” by respondents. This is often not the case at such gatherings.

Removing the high and low value from each of the three major groups reveals a very tight (3.8 - 4.1) range of average responses, with a 4.0 overall average value indicating that team member contributions were “very much valued” by their fellow participants at the conference.

In their narrative responses to the independent evaluator, many respondents gave high marks to the subgroups they took advantage of while at the conference. The opportunity to both share feelings and information with, as well as glean perspectives and techniques from, their peers no matter what their job description, was reflected upon with great praise.

QUESTION 10. Has your team developed a process for measuring and recording their performance outcomes throughout the implementation process?



YES- Action Plan Generated

- *Bi-weekly basis*
- *Discussed at each meeting*
- *Done or not done equals the measure*
- *We use an existing countywide form*
- *Mental Health issues will be recorded*
- *Working a single event, easy to be aware*
- *Special Educational unit will give us data*
- *Juvenile violence court and juvenile drug court expansion*
- *Effects of maintaining/lowering out of home placement levels*
- *We created a new school for vocational training- the aftercare component has strict aftercare for one year*
- *Interim goals established - met almost all - now focusing on final goal residential drug treatment*
- *Truancy will put amount of kids back in school - the number of programs and kids in programs*

Yes Adopted/Adapted Preexisting Program Criteria

- *Had been doing this organized around juvenile justice process - not new for us but provides good focus*
- *In conjunction with juvenile justice system process access to court studies data on substance-abusing youth, incarcerated youth, youth on probation, and youth in placements*
- *Working on it now*
- *Program is subservient to the “big picture”*
- *Somewhat designed to CPA 2000 implementation - not too specifically focused on numbers*

- *JJCC regular team meetings take care of this, multiagency juvenile justice plan in response to AB1913*
- *Crime Prevention Act of 2000 and ROPP required a comprehensive juvenile justice planning process with measurable outcomes for specific programs. Outcomes will be measured and documented with reports required to be made to funding sources*

No

- *No one to do it*
- *We haven't met*
- *We have not met since February*
- *Only two meetings since conference*
- *Only one meeting after return - no cohesion*
- *Not sure what we want to do in the long term*
- *Only one follow up session - we aren't statisticians*
- *We are already doing lots...because we are almost perfect*
- *Very small agency - each staff covers many bases - no staff - no time*
- *Due to change in team members and change in juvenile court presiding judge; interruption of continuity of court bench*
- *More involved in trying to get something done and not worrying about measuring e.g. after school program started but too early to measure - we are cognizant of progress*
- *Too busy at the conference - back to business at regular meetings I ask, "what ever happened to our Action plan? "*
- *County now starting to look at its juvenile justice system - going to build a new juvenile hall - now have "compulsion " for county to do it.*

Yes & No

- *Steps in but limited*
- *Not consistently done but exists -- already awareness of events serve as indices*
- *Monthly meetings, follow-up by state, plus progress reports to policy council on children and youth*
- *No - not a made up "silly system" Yes - all invested, all participate as equals in common knowledge*
- *Immediately after the conference new juvenile hall funding came through and then team members became juvenile drug court group*
- *No - not specific numbers Yes - small county - common knowledge held by operatives*
- *No - not formalized Yes - lots of follow up meetings to measure decrease in truancy*
- *In the beginning for each stage of four objectives, some more precise than others*

Unsure

- *I'm not sure*
- *I'm not sure*
- *I don't know*
- *Only two meetings since conference*

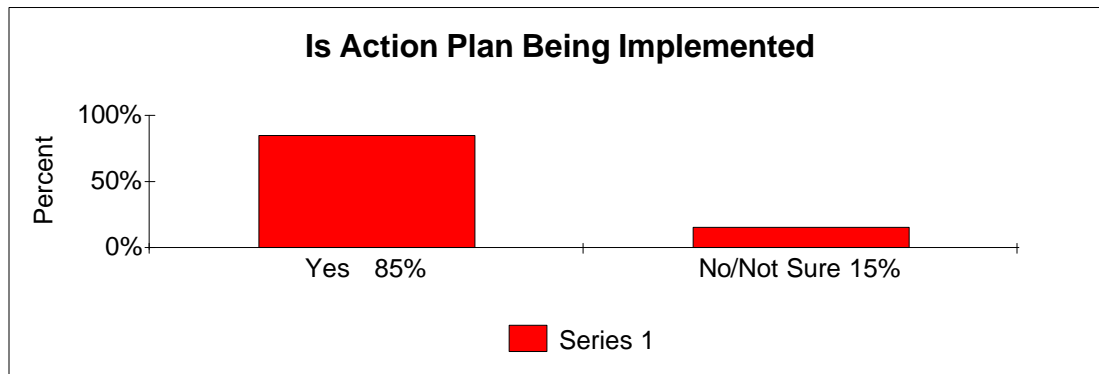
Evaluator Comments

For approximately two-thirds of respondents, awareness of Action Plan progress appears to be widespread either as a result of actual hard number indices, periodic meetings or exposure to and/or attendance at events which all contribute to body of commonly held knowledge by system players. Although many teams generated new Action Plan specific outcome measures for objectives, others adopted criteria already in existence and applicable from preexisting funding programs such as AB1913, ROPP and CPA 2000.

Those respondents indicating “no” system was in place for tracking outcomes commonly mentioned that few if any meetings had taken place since the original conference. Others indicated that their agency was too small, they lacked both staff and time, or they were too involved trying to “get something done and not worrying about measuring.” One respondent offered, “We’re not statisticians!”

QUESTION 11. Is your Court’s Juvenile Delinquency Action Plan being implemented?

The purpose of this question was not to delve into the nuances of each jurisdiction’s Action Plan but rather to gain insight into the respondents’ awareness of its progress. The answer to this question is a resounding YES!



Many “yes” responses were forthcoming from respondents whose knowledge appeared firsthand and heartfelt. Be it a judge facilitating new interdepartmental meetings, a probation officer grateful for the opportunity to attend, or a public defender expressing appreciation for a wider spectrum of dispositional alternatives now available within the system, many offered their responses with a sense of pride in what had already been accomplished and expressed hope for continued improvement in the future. Many affirmative responses are also based on the litany of successes noted in respondents’ answers to question 13 as well as the present and future benefits offered in questions 14 and 15.

Respondents who are more operationally involved with the day-to-day tasks associated with implementing the Action Plan objectives were in a better position to provide a more timely and detailed response. Others respondents, while aware that some objectives had

already been implemented, spoke of others that were in various stages of being made operational such as awaiting funding or, in the case of a site for a Drug Treatment Center, the availability of physical resources. Respondents spoke of the fact that many objectives were being actively discussed at regular meetings and these meetings served as their way of knowing that the Action Plan was in fact moving forward.

Other “yes” responses were based on reflections that some of the work that was being designed and carried out relative to the Action Plan was also being implemented as part of previous programs generated in response to AB1913, ROPP and / or CPO 2000.

It is important to note that a component specific to this Action Plan (rather than a derivative of any previous programs) was the value of the collaborative process respondents had experienced. This process was often mentioned as providing the opportunity to become exposed to information unavailable prior to the conference - when everyone did “his or her own thing.” This new interdepartmental collaboration, in the form of regular meetings, expanded resource awareness along with the sharing of information and concerns and has created a conduit through which many respondents come to be aware of their jurisdiction’s progressing Action Plan.

Those respondents indicating “no” to this question cite few if any meetings since the conference, a lack of direction or leadership, it’s not *yet* being done or, they weren’t sure what we want to do in the long term as explaining the situation in their respective jurisdictions.

One respondent brought up an interesting issue that served as an explanation as to why the Plan was only “somewhat” implemented. “Affordable Indifference” was the term used by this respondent to describe a situation where the time and tasks required to implement a particular objective were being shared among multiple agencies, yet not one of them was tracking results. Perhaps when the resources needed to implement an objective, in this case staff hours, come together from multiple sources, accountability for tracking results needs to be an operational priority. This is, in fact, one of the primary challenges recognized to interagency collaboration and needs to be addressed in future efforts.

QUESTION 12. *As part of our efforts to implement a specific objective in our Juvenile Delinquency Action Plan, we have experienced the following barrier(s).*

Some respondents were unaware of any barriers, or had not experienced any to date. However, the majority of responses once again illustrate a range of encounters, some common to all organizations such as a finite resource pool, others more specific to individual objectives such as direct resistance. The examples below are representative of these barriers as described by respondents. Evaluators assigned a descriptive title to groups of like barriers and listed quotes from respondents.

Organizational Uncertainty

- *Legislative changes midstream*
- *Getting everyone to meet regularly*
- *Uncertainty about what we do already*
- *Lack of team meetings after the conference*
- *Remaining current about available resources*
- *Lack of active participation by all stakeholders*
- *Demands of new programs being implemented by state*

Funding and Other Resources

- *Pay level not competitive*
- *Systems of Care, staff turnover*
- *Funding source limits uses of funds*
- *Lack of qualified staff leads to interdepartmental raiding*
- *Legislative funding expired after we operationalized an objective*
- *Programs with insufficient personnel to satisfy staffing requirements*
- *Lack of appropriate incentives sufficient to maintain professionalism*
- *Turnover in staff therefore needs recommitment to the Plan over and over*
- *Need to expand program - but continuation of original funding hampers our efforts*

Agency Conflicts

- *Internal - lax enforcement*
- *Agency conflicts - sabotage*
- *Private practitioners threatened*
- *Confidentiality issues between agencies*
- *Labor agreements conflict with mandates*
- *Lack of participation from law enforcement*
- *Different agencies not vertically coordinated*
- *Improving services - resistance by current service providers*
- *Coordination of services within and between departmental staff*
- *Tunnel vision of agencies too parochial - decreases breadth of alternatives*
- *Resistance to objectives by agencies involved who did not attend conference*

Work Load

- *Size of bureaucracy*
- *Logistics are complicated*
- *Shear volume of paperwork*
- *Lack of communication - too big of a plan*
- *Data systems - the magnitude of organization*
- *Everyone has too much else to do - lack of time*
- *Demands of daily grind dilute commitment to new plans*

Attitude

- *Attitude of superior court*
- *Difference of perspectives*
- *Cooperation of policy makers*
- *Getting buy-ins commitment and time*
- *Attitudinal - political hot potato - the process of political change*
- *Developing a model, gathering a consensus and operational funding*
- *We came a long way.... a change of judge has destroyed culture here*

Community Resources

- *Changing a community's philosophy*
- *Physical facilities - too small or lack of*
- *Property access for residential substance abuse*
- *Transitional housing - "lots" and it's not just the land*
- *Lack of placement alternatives to juvenile hall from mental health court*

Education System

- *Getting attention of parents*
- *Large number of school districts*
- *Mentoring program - time limitations and lack of participation to new start*
- *Lack of research on needs of female juveniles, a large sexually abused population*
- *Improving educational services for juveniles - lack of basic educational skills causes disruptive behavior - therefore no success*

Evaluator Comments

Not unexpectedly, the barriers described by respondents appear to cover a wide range of circumstances. Lack of knowledge, participation, and commitment fuel a sense of uncertainty for some respondents. Competing or conflicting legislative mandates contribute to a sense of "directionlessness" for others.

The hierarchical and bifurcated nature of bureaucratic organizations is well known. In such organizational structures, the scope and authority of decision-making is rigidly differentiated between levels (which typically are many), with the scope and authority of decisions made increasingly toward the top of the organization. However, actual implementation of objectives is carried out by numerous subdivisions, departments, and groups or teams separated - often isolated - by functional responsibility, knowledge and tasks. As illustrated by the reflections of many respondents, this characteristically competitive organizational structure appears to have provided a fertile environment for conflict within and between agencies and jurisdictions throughout the juvenile justice system.

Another common characteristic of public sector organizations is that funding levels directly impact the quality and longevity of the organization's staff and programs. Continuity of staff is critical to eventual success, particularly when applied to the

formative stages of any collaborative effort. Perhaps future funding programs can arrive in the hands of implementers in such a way as to enhance the ability of the agency to more flexibly apply these fiscal resources to the needs of its staff and clientele without sacrificing accountability. For example, while “what” these dollars may be dedicated to remains specifically defined, the “when” component may be more open-ended and thereby allow staff to more effectively apply limited resources to fit specific circumstances -- as they arise.

Workload and the burnout of personnel is a real issue facing the people in the juvenile justice system. Unique situations faced by each jurisdiction demand focused attention. Perhaps the new sense of open communication and collaboration resulting from the conference will serve to help the players leverage the use of resources to better handle the challenges they face.

Some barriers characterized by critical time constraints, such as grant application deadlines are finite and not easily changed. As such, perhaps the only solution is to wait until *next time*. Other barriers are amenable to more direct interventions such as increased training or funding, while others are more responsive over time as with influencing attitudes and perceptions held by system players, legislators and the communities they serve.

Whatever the remedy, this compilation of constraints garnered direct from the front line implementers can serve as an invaluable guide for future strategic and operational planning efforts.

QUESTION 13. *As part of our Court’s effort to implement specific objectives described in our Action Plan, we are aware of the following success(s).*

The following is representative of the range of “successes” described by respondents. These responses are arranged by topic headings designated by evaluators.

Minors

- *Drug court up and running*
- *Mental health court started*
- *CASA/implemented since 7/01*
- *Drug treatment biggest to date*
- *Youth Summit/got venue booked*
- *Mentoring already implemented*
- *Increasing number of group home graduates*
- *Residential programs have physical and funding models*
- *Trend toward collaboration helps stop falling through gaps*
- *Mental health services increase assessment level for all kids in juvenile hall (hired 4 staff/revamped entire detention)*
- *Youth Summit’s successful planning and facilitator training -- occurred nine months after the [Juvenile Delinquency] Conference*
- *Integrated services/and interagency placement unit is established and working*

- *Female juvenile services -- positive steps taken toward increasing female juvenile supervision*
- *Female juveniles/increase awareness for regular assessment for molestation and domestic violence*
- *Specialized female case load in probation in place now AB1913 monies applied, trained probation and counselors to do it*
- *Identified gaps in services which led to transition program from camp to community and a mixed staff approach with case management oversight leading to decreased placements in juvenile hall*

Families

- *Juvenile drug court started in October*
- *Supervised visitation started on limited basis*
- *Reinstated juvenile violence court as of 8/01*
- *ALERT/leads to interventions with parenting skills*
- *Re-staffed and implemented early intervention team*
- *CPA 2000 wraparound services for families implemented 7/01*
- *Additional substance abuse kids go to court and community programs*
- *Decreased time delay returning to school/ procedural success players at table to discuss how to do*
- *Increased probation for "602" (delinquent) kids therefore lessening major violations / or resulted in better attitude by kids*

Communities

- *Curfew laws completed by April 1*
- *Electronic monitoring: contract in place*
- *Economic development: receipt of AB1913 funding*
- *Transfer of Knowledge Conference sold out crowd*
- *Juvenile violence court very successful; implemented 7/01*
- *Residential treatment/community players philosophically agree*
- *Opposition to juvenile hall /juvenile crime attention highlighted now*
- *Community outreach juvenile justice commission willing to participate*
- *Substance abuse: implemented drug court in West county; East county pending*
- *Restorative Justice: community forum held in June; press coverage favorable*
- *Foundation for local money and program coordination/ID people resources to broaden support base*
- *Refined preexisting camp services: now follow-up for three months after discharge didn't exist before conference*

Schools

- *Decreased truancy /planning has led to implementation*
- *Truancy court/ has strong advocacy by local court commissioner therefore will get done*
- *Increased involvement with community: working closely with schools; now have mock court coverage and general "PR" about juvenile system increased in newspaper*

- *Advance prevention and early intervention programs/ now 25 campuses have security at schools, have countywide buy-ins*
- *Tutoring program: in place in Juvenile Hall now with one dedicated Dept. of Education position*
- *Universal preschool/ conducted surveys of all kindergarten teachers in area to assess needs*

Juvenile Justice System

- *Drug court/ have funding*
- *Provider service trainings - 2 per month*
- *Task force and core group still together*
- *Original perceived barriers of bureaucracy not there*
- *Critique of program forces us to deal with self-reflection*
- *Key players in county involved/players were on board instantly*
- *Central data system / there are efforts to get buy-ins vs. compliance*
- *Mental health court started/ very cohesive multisystem contributions*
- *Juvenile drug court/good motivated team/success of adult drug court*
- *Team building: /have hired case mgr.; meetings have been productive*
- *Recruit and retain staff: tremendous trainings and commitment to trainings*
- *Conference provided format to further development of AB1913 programs vs. reinventing the wheel*
- *Restorative Justice fully implemented as a standard dispositional alternative*
- *Drug court grant has finished its federal requirements - have commitment from our board plus AB1913 monies*
- *Resources guide has increased awareness for need to get CEO office to begin to match needs and dollars*
- *Restorative Justice: getting half-time position; finance department willing to help new court orders*
- *Hired an administrative director to manage drug courts from personnel to funding*
- *Comprehensive assessment center: probation officer devoted AB1913 funds; swift effective collaborative effort between Probation and Department of Social Services; it was impressive*
- *Mixed managers meet twice a month, directors meet regularly and discuss strategy and dollar issues*
- *Court facilitator/court administrator promptly arranged for facilitator to perform this helpful function*

Evaluator Comments

Respondents have described a broad range of successes across the board as a result of the ongoing implementation of their respective Action Plans. New drug and mental health courts have been started, mentoring programs are in place, and increases in group-home graduates are real as are historically large increases in drug treatment. A newly recognized need for a more acute assessment of and sensitivity to the needs of female juveniles, accompanied by an increase in dedicated staff hiring and training, illustrates another major accomplishment.

A new and highly valued sense of collaboration throughout the system exists for many respondents as a result of increased buy-ins by key players in their counties, some of whom were “on board instantly.” No doubt, this new level of cooperation up the ladder helped to dissolve some commonly held perceptions of bureaucratic barriers that turned out “not to be there.” Increases in hiring and training appear to be a key element in successful implementation.

The fact that many core groups are still together, combined with very cohesive multiagency contributions, as illustrated by an impressive collaborative effort between Probation and Department of Social Services personnel, shine as examples of the success of this project. The increase in commitment to recruiting and retaining superior staff, the creation of full- and part-time dedicated positions (such as an administrative director to manage a drug court) rather than piling responsibilities higher on existing staff, is perhaps indicative of a change in operational thinking.

The inclusion of the Court Executive Officer in the planning process as well as newly scheduled regular meetings between a variety of department managers and directors more effectively matches needs and dollars and reflects a new approach to sharing the work system-wide.

The successes described appear to be widespread and deep...and many respondents indicated that this is just the beginning.

QUESTION 14. What benefits have you, the Court, or others experienced to date as a result of implementing your Court’s Juvenile Delinquency Action Plan?

Benefits described generally fall into two categories, those effecting minors, and those impacting the system or the community at large. Several respondents reported not being aware of any benefits as yet, citing a decrease in involvement with the team or that it was “too soon.”

The benefits suggested by respondents, both those benefits presently in evidence and those projected for the future (Q15), are not mutually exclusive. The redundancy reflected in the responses to these two questions exposes the complexity and continuous evolution of demands faced by the juvenile justice system.

Benefits to Minors

- *A decrease in truancy*
- *Earlier, more timely interventions*
- *Tutoring services to improve education*
- *Increase in services for female juveniles*
- *The availability of multiple coverage or a wraparound approach*
- *Decreased placements out of the home resulting from adult parenting classes*
- *Minors now feel more empowered through perceived access to policy makers*

Benefits to Justice System or Community

- *Better coordination of services*
- *People now accept the idea of a second chance to change old patterns of thinking*
- *Due to a higher recognition by legal system players of the magnitude of the juvenile drug problem, resources have come to light which we were not aware of before*
- *Establishment of educational advocacy has lead to sensitizing previously indifferent management that education leads to success in the criminal justice system; however, a big problem exists in identifying those who qualify for educational resources*
- *Awareness by system players that education provides diversion from “602” (delinquent) behavior*
- *Coordinated services among agencies*
- *Written plan has led to earlier implementation of next steps*
- *Social Services now has strengthened relationships with court players*
- *The opportunity to now share our information and feelings about specific kids*
- *Identification of major service gaps now leads to improved justice system communication, interventions and services thereby reducing duplication of efforts*
- *Broader comprehension of needs now leads to a more rapid and friendly response, which leads to an earlier and more focused response to client needs*

Evaluator Comments

Skill, caring, focus and commitment historically have been applied piecemeal by justice system players to the never-ending refinement of strategies and responses to the needs of juvenile justice system clientele. As a result of this project, this operational heritage of separateness, the sense of “Us Against Them” is in the process of being unseated and replaced with, “We are working toward our objectives system-wide.” This sharing of perspectives and resources, as well as the responsibilities faced by all juvenile justice system professionals, within and between jurisdictions, is perhaps one of the most salient benefits of the conference action planning process in evidence to date.

This systemic realignment of awareness and focused effort has already spawned benefits to minors and their families. Actual decreases in truancy, a reduction in out-of-home placements resulting from earlier and timelier interventions and the introduction of adult parenting classes reveal some of the initial benefits of a synergistic approach.

Generally, respondents reflected a sense of relief and gratitude citing that they now can share their feelings and information about specific kids more freely, and in return they get a more rapid, effective, and friendly response from their colleagues. Having identified some major service gaps in the process of creating their Action Plans, respondents now feel they have improved their communication as well as the effectiveness of their interventions, which can have a significant impact on reducing duplication of efforts.

QUESTION 15. *What future benefits do you reasonably anticipate will result from implementation of the Juvenile Delinquency Action Plan?*

For some respondents concerns about future funding combined with the short amount of time since the conference fueled a hesitation to predict future benefits. Some had not seen any benefits to date and as such declined to offer any future predictions. Other respondents identified a significant number of anticipated benefits. Some examples of anticipated benefits to be experienced by minors, their families and communities as described by respondents (and grouped by topic by evaluators) are:

Minors

- *A reduction in substance abuse*
- *A wider safety net will be provided*
- *More camp type or local guidance programs...and less locking up*
- *Children will benefit if we get a restorative justice program in place*
- *Being able to be treated for drugs in a structured setting so they have a fighting chance*
- *Probation and prosecutor now increase disposition dialogue more than before and therefore have better rehabilitative options*

Families

- *Decreased substance abuse*
- *An increase in rehabilitation services will be offered after punishment*
- *Via teaching better parenting skills thereby improving role models for the next generation*
- *Through increased communication, the increased coordination will lead to an increase in quality of service to clients thereby improving the quality of life for families*

Communities

- *The ability to reintegrate more successfully into society*
- *New jobs and sense of accountability and respect from the community*
- *Will be fewer kids in high-end placements - level 10 to 14 group homes*
- *An increase in skills leading to better employment, which then improves their legitimacy and community standing*

Schools

- *Actual reduction in delinquency*
- *Schools through decreased attention to truancy*
- *Previously unidentified children will have their educational needs met therefore a decrease in potential delinquent behavior*
- *Schools benefit through better equipped kids exhibiting less disruptive and “reflex” behavior to manage...more time to teach*

Justice System

- *Continued collaboration between agencies*
- *Levels of accountability will become communal*
- *A greater sense of “partnership” as agencies grow*
- *A blended funding model will be inherently collaborative*
- *Increased interaction and accessibility leading to a greater understanding of what can and cannot be done*
- *Team gets satisfaction from seeing some success*
- *Decreased costs via improved pre-placement interviews*
- *CEO on board now will lead to increased funding awareness.*
- *Through Family Resource Centers, inclusion leads to increased comprehensiveness therefore we function collaboratively vs. competitively for resource applications*
- *Entire profession via early interventions through ALERT*
- *All agencies will benefit as global awareness spreads about resources: how to get access - when to go there - how to go there*
- *Public will have better understanding of justice system decision making process*
- *With new levels of synergy agencies will have options, via coexistence awareness, i.e., a continuum of sanctions.*
- *All of us through a continuous process of buying in*
- *The Action Plan gave us common ground to deal with juvenile counsel and larger community team building efforts*
- *Through “Critique Report” a better system will increase goodwill between players*
- *In the process of changing lives, probation can now see light at the end of the tunnel*

Evaluator Comments

The future benefits recorded here are myriad. Most lauded is a restored sense of cohesiveness among many juvenile justice system players. This sense of cohesiveness helps to dissolve a sense of futility, born of bureaucratic limitations and an ever-increasing caseload, held by many justice system operatives.

It is the *act* of sharing feelings, information, ideas, the common challenges and not so common solutions that has made the action planning experience so very valuable, and the Action Plans so productive for many jurisdictions. It is this *act* of sharing that has nurtured individual and group actions resulting in the vast array of both present and future benefits listed above. Respondents repeatedly noted, “we” [as teams] must be maintained and enhanced, (as with the now scheduled August 2002 conference) in order for the juvenile justice system to effectively adapt to future demands. This renewed sense of “us” generates a feeling that it is at least *possible* to accomplish positive change for “our kids.”

III. CONCLUSIONS

The 55% response rate to the follow up component of this project serves as a testimony to the dedication and tireless effort put forth on a daily basis by the juvenile justice system teams involved with the creation and implementation of their jurisdiction's Action Plans.

The conference itself successfully met a wide spectrum of expectations held by an overwhelming majority of respondents. With 77% of respondents reporting that their teams departed with a completed Action Plan in-hand, the planning process they experienced also appears to have met with success. This process generated a momentum of its own that respondents carried back to their individual jurisdictions, which encouraged them to further develop and refine their Action Plans — essentially creating a living document.

Although twice as many respondents report having been able to rank Action Plan objectives by priority as were not, it is important to recognize that this process takes place in a legal, social and economic milieu which is in constant flux. As such, individual factors such as funding, staffing levels, population and geographic statistics as well as jurisdictionally specific attitudes and community perceptions present enormous challenges to a legal system attempting to focus upon an ever changing juvenile justice system environment.

Additionally, associating outcome measures to specific objectives and tasks with some degree of accuracy and precision proved to be a mixed bag of challenges as noted by many respondents. While techniques for identifying priorities may be available in any project management workshop, getting true commitment to behaviors in pursuit of measurable outcomes, rather than creating the appearance of compliance within this dynamic societal environment, may require more focused, circumstantially specific training.

The Action Plans appear to be having a positive influence upon the daily operations and planning processes of many jurisdictions through a new collaborative teamwork approach among multiple agencies. In many cases although the Action Plan does not “govern” the way the Court plans and carries out its duties, it does serve as a guide and is being blended into preexisting programs funded by AB1913 and ROPP.

Team members created their respective Action Plans with great zeal and commitment for the most part. Respondents gave 91% their fellow team members an average ranking of 7.0 or above on a 0 to 10 scale (10 being the highest level of participation). An average ranking 8.0 or above was given to 75% of team members by survey respondents.

It not surprising that many respondents reflected upon their continued role in support of the Action Plan's objectives with warmth and pride. Many, such as Judges, Probation Officers and Public Defenders, are deeply and continuously involved in the implementation process. Not all respondents are as directly or deeply invested. Some, due to a change in their position, are minimally or no longer involved with Action Plan objectives, although these are very few in number. At least one other mentioned a

significant change in working relationships due to the change of the juvenile judge. Many who are not more intimately involved still attend meetings where they continue to support the larger goals associated with specific Action Plan objectives.

With the exception of a very few respondents, perhaps less than three, all others expressed joy, gratitude, thankfulness and a sense that being a team member was an “invaluable” experience to have been a part of and “When’s it happening again?” They mentioned how it made the system work better and gave them an opportunity to see how others “did it.” They both loved it and cherish the opportunity to do it again.

Respondents felt their fellow team members’ contributions to the planning process and the Action Plan they produced were “very much” valued giving these contributions an over all average rating of 4.0 out of a possible 5.0. The composition of the teams, dictated by design or circumstance, resulted in a very favorable experience for participants, and subsequently a viable and achievable Action Plan.

For 85% of respondents their Action Plans are being implemented. Some objectives have already been achieved, either as a specific part of this Action Plan or as a component of already existing programs. The numerous successes listed in the body of this report attest to the many objectives and/or components of objectives that have been implemented thus far. The team Action Plan has provided a strategic focus for the effective and precise application of juvenile justice system resources across the state.

For many respondents the barriers they encountered in the process of attempting to implement objectives could be called the “Lacks Gang:” lack of funds, lack of time, lack of cooperation, lack of physical facilities, lack of staff, lack of leadership and a lack of direction. Other barriers cited were too much work, too much interagency conflict and too much community resistance. These barriers are common bedfellows within any large organization and as such, demand clever and insightful interventions to ameliorate the toll they take in the form of decreased effectiveness and ineffective use of resources.

Despite these very real barriers, the collaborative character of the Action Planning process and the inclusion of many diversified players in the design and implementation of the Action Plan’s objectives have produced a long list of successes mentioned by respondents. The efforts to implement these Action Plans have produced a bounty of successes for the system, its clientele, its staff of dedicated professionals and their respective communities.

Many immediate benefits have already been experienced by juvenile justice system clientele and particularly by the system’s staff. As reflected upon by respondents, future benefits appear to be widespread and plentiful provided the collaborative, multiagency interdepartmental model of planning, implementing and adapting to the very changing and increasing demands the system faces, continues to take root and is encouraged to prosper. This way of the future — collaboration — will help avoid the pitfalls of the past.